THE PRODIGAL JUDGE

By VAUGHAN KESTER

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SYNOPSIS.

The scene at the opening of the story is laid in the library of an old worn-out southern plantation, known as the Barony. The place is to be sold, and its history and that of the owners, the Quintards, is the subject of discussion by Jonathan Crenshaw, a business man, a Yancy a farmer, when Hannibal Wayne stranger known as Bladen, and Bob Hazard, a mysterious child of the old Yancy tells how he adopted the boy. Na-southern family, makes his appearance. thaniel Ferris buys the Barony, but the Quintards deny any knowledge of the boy. Yancy to keep Hannibal. Captain Murrell, a friend of the Quintards, appears and asks questions about the Barony.

CHAPTER V. (Continued.)

When Betty Malroy rode away from Squire Balaam's Murrell galloped after her. Presently she heard the beat of his horse's hoofs as he came pounding along the sandy road, and glanced back over her shoulder. With an exclamation of displeasure she reined in her horse. Murrell quickly gained a place at her side.

"I suppose Ferris is at the Barony?" he said, drawing his horse down to a walk.

"I believe he is," said Betty with a curt little air.

"May I ride with you?" he gave her a swift glance. She nodded indifferently and would have urged her horse into a gallop again, but he made a gesture of protest. "Don't—or I shall think you are still running away from me," he said with a short laugh.

"Were you at the trial?" she asked. "I am glad they didn't get Hannibal away from Yancy."

"Oh, Yancy will have his hands full with that later—so will Bladen," he added, significantly. He studied her out of those deeply sunken eyes of his in which no shadow of youth lingered, for men such as he reached their prime early, and it was a swiftly passing splendor. "Ferris tells me you are going to west Tennessee?" he said at length.

"Yes."

"I know your half-brother, Tom Ware—I know him very well."

"So you know Tom?" she observed, and frowned slightly. Tom was her guardian, and her memories of him were not satisfactory. A burly, unshaven man with a queer streak of meanness through his character.

"You've spent much of your time up north?" suggested Murrell.

"Four years I've been at school, you know. That's where I met Judith Ferris."

"I hope you'll like west Tennessee. It's still a bit raw compared with what you've been accustomed to in the north. You haven't been back in all those four years?" Betty shook her head. "Nor seen Tom—nor any one from out yonder?" For some reason a little tinge of color had crept into Betty's cheeks. "Will you let me renew our acquaintance at Belle Plain? I shall be in west Tennessee before the summer is over; probably I shall leave here within a week," he said, bending toward her. His glance dwelt on her face and on the pliant lines of her figure, and his senses swam.

"I imagine you will be welcome at Belle Plain. You are Tom's friend." Murrell bit his lip, and then laughed as his mind conjured up a picture of the cherished Tom. Suddenly he reached out and rested his hand on hers.

"Betty—if I might think—" he began, but his tongue stumbled. His love-making was usually of a savage sort, but some quality in the girl held him in check. Betty drew away from him, an angry color on her cheeks and an angry light in her eyes. "Forgive me, Betty!" murmured Murrell, but his heart beat against his ribs, and passion sent its surges through him. "Don't you know what I'm trying to tell you?" he whispered. Betty gathered up her reins. "Not yet—" he cried, and again he rested a heavy hand on hers.

"Let me go—let me go!" cried Betty indignantly.

"No—not yet!" He urged his horse still nearer and gathered her close. "You've got to hear me. I've loved you since the first moment I rested my eyes on you—and, by God, you shall love me in return!" He felt her struggle to free herself from his grasp with a sense of savage triumph.

Bruce Carrington, on his way back to Fayetteville from the Forks, came about a turn in the road. Betty saw a tall, handsome fellow in the first flush of manhood; Carrington, an angry girl struggling in a man's grasp.

At sight of the new-comer, Murrell, with an oath, released Betty who, striking her horse with the whip, galloped down the road toward the Barony. As she fled past Carrington she bent low in her saddle.

"Don't let him follow me!" she gasped, and Carrington, striding forward, caught Murrell's horse by the bit.

"Let go!" roared Murrell, and a murderous light shot from his eyes.

"I don't know but I should pull you out of that saddle and twist your neck!" said Carrington hotly. Murrell's face underwent a swift change.

"You're a bold fellow to force your way into a lover's quarrel," he said quietly. Carrington's arm dropped at his side. Perhaps, after all, it was that.

"I Don't Know but What I Should Pull You Out of That Saddle and Twist Your Neck."

CHAPTER VI.

Betty Sets Out for Tennessee.

Bruce's first memories had to do with long nights when he perched beside his father on the cabin roof of their keel-boat and watched the stars or the blurred line of the shore where it lay against the sky, or the lights on other barges and rafts drifting as they were drifting, with their wheat and corn and whisky, to that common market at the river's mouth.

Bruce Carrington had seen the day of barge and raft reach its zenith, had heard the first steam packet's shrieking whistle, which sounded the death-knell of the ancient order, though the shifting of the trade was a slow matter and the glory of the old did not pass over to the new at once, but lingered still in mighty fleets of rafts and keel-boats and in the Homeric carousals of some ten thousand of the half-horse, half-alligator breed that nightly gathered in New Orleans.

After the reading of the warrant that morning, Charley Balsam had shown Carrington the road to the Forks, assuring him when they separated that with a little care and decent use of his eyes it would be possible to fetch up there and not pass plumb through the settlement without knowing where he was.

He was on his way to Fayetteville, where he intended to spend the night, and perhaps a day or two in looking around, when the meeting with Betty and Murrell occurred. The girl's face remained with him. It was a face he would like to see again.

He was still thinking of the girl when he ate his supper that night at Cleggett's Tavern. Later, in the bar, he engaged his host in idle gossip. He had met a gentleman and a lady on the road that day! he wondered, as he toyed with his glass, if it could have been the Ferrises? Mounted? Yes, mounted. Then it was Ferris and his wife—or it might have been Captain Murrell and Miss Malroy. Miss Malroy did not live in that part of the country; she was a friend of Mrs. Ferris', belonged in Kentucky or Tennessee, or somewhere out yonder—at any rate she was bringing her visit to an end, for Ferris had instructed him to reserve a place for her in the north-bound stage on the morrow.

Carrington suddenly remembered that he had thought of starting north in the morning himself.

The stage left at six, and as Carrington climbed to his seat the next morning Mr. Cleggett was advising the driver to look sharp when he came to the Barony road, as he was to pick up a party there. It was Carrington who looked sharp, and almost at the spot where he had seen Miss Malroy the day before he saw her again, with Ferris and Judith and a pile of luggage bestowed by the wayside. Betty did not observe him as the coach stopped, for she was intent on her farewells with her friends. There were hasty words of advice from Ferris, prolonged good-bys to Judith, tears—kisses—while a place was being made for her many boxes and trunks. Carrington gathered that she was going north to Washington; that her final destination was some point either on the Ohio or Mississippi, and that her name was Betty. Then the door slammed and the stage was in motion again.

All through the morning they swung forward in the heat and dust and glare, and at midday rattled into the shaded main street of a sleepy village and drew up before the tavern where dinner was waiting them.

Betty saw Carrington when she took her seat, and gave a scarcely perceptible start of surprise. Then her face was flooded with a rich color. This was the man who saw her with Captain Murrell yesterday! There was a brief moment of irresolution and then she bowed coldly.

It was four days to Richmond. Four days of hot, dusty travel, four nights of uncomfortable cross-road stations, where Betty suffered sleepless nights and the unaccustomed pangs of early rising. She occasionally found herself wondering who Carrington was. She approved of the manner in which he conducted himself. She liked a man who could be unobtrusive.

The next morning he found himself seated opposite her at breakfast. He received another curt little nod, cool and distant, as he took his seat.

"You stop in Washington?" said Carrington.

Betty shook her head. "No, I am going on to Wheeling."

"You're fortunate in being so nearly home," he observed. "I'm going on to Memphis."

Betty exclaimed: "Why, I am going to Memphis, too!"

"Are you? By canal to Cumberland, and then by stage over the National Road to Wheeling?"

Betty nodded. "It makes one wish they'd finish their railroads, doesn't it? Do you suppose they'll ever get as far west as Memphis?" she said.

"They say it's going to be bad for the river trade when they're built on something besides paper," answered Carrington. "And I happen to be a flatboatman, Miss Malroy."

No more was said just then, for Betty became reserved and did not attempt to resume the conversation. A day later they rumbled into Washington, and as Betty descended from the coach Carrington stepped to her side.

"I suppose you'll stop here, Miss Malroy," he said, indicating the tavern before which the stage had come to a stand.

"Yes," said Betty briefly.

"If I can be of any service to you—" he began, with just a touch of awkwardness in his manner.

"No, I thank you, Mr. Carrington," said Betty quickly.

"Good night . . . good-by." He turned away, and Betty saw his tall form disappear in the twilight.

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A month and more had elapsed since Bob Yancy's trial. Just two days later man and boy disappeared from Scratch Hill. Murrell was soon on their trail and pressing forward in hot pursuit. Reaching the mountains, he heard of them first as ten days ahead of him and bound for west Tennessee; the ten days dwindled to a week, the week became five days, the five days three; and now as he emerged from the last range of hills he caught sight of them.

Yancy glanced back at the blue wall of the mountains where it lay along the horizon.

"Well, Nevvy," he said, "we've put a heap of distance between us and old Scratch Hill."

For the past ten days their journey had been conducted in a leisurely fashion. As Yancy said, they were seeing the world, and it was well to take a good look at it while they had a chance.

Suddenly out of the silence came the regular beat of hoofs. These grew nearer and nearer, and at last when they were quite close, Yancy faced about. Smilingly Murrell reined in his horse.

"Why—Bob Yancy!" he cried in apparent astonishment.

"Yes, sir—Bob Yancy. Does it happen you are looking fo' him, Captain?" inquired Yancy.

"No—no, Bob. I'm on my way west."

Murrell slipped from his saddle and fell into step at Yancy's side as they moved forward.

"They were mightily stirred up at the Cross Roads when I left, wondering what had come of you," he observed.

"That's kind of them," responded Yancy, a little dryly. There was no reason for it, but he was becoming distrustful of Murrell, and uneasy.

They went forward in silence. A sudden turn in the road brought them to the edge of an extensive clearing. Close to the road there were several buildings, but not a tree had been spared to shelter them and they stood forth starkly, the completing touch to a civilization that was still in its youth, unkempt, rather savage, and ruthlessly utilitarian. A sign announced the dingy structure of logs nearest the roadside a tavern.

From the door of the tavern the figure of a man emerged. He was black-haired and bull-necked, and there was about him a certain shagginess which a recent toilet performed at the horse trough had not served to mitigate.

"Howdy?" he drawled.

"Howdy?" responded Mr. Yancy.

"Shall you stop here?" asked Murrell, sinking his voice. Yancy nodded. "Can you put us up?" inquired Murrell, turning to the tavern-keeper.

"I reckon that's what I'm here for," said Slosson. Murrell glanced about the empty yard. "Slack," observed Slosson languidly. "Yes, sir, slack's the only name for it." It was understood he referred to the state of trade. He looked from one to the other of the two men. As his eyes rested on Murrell, that gentleman raised the first three fingers of his right hand. The gesture was ever so little, yet it seemed to have a tonic effect on Mr. Slosson. What might have developed into a smile had he not immediately suppressed it, twisted his bearded lips as he made an answering movement. "Eph, come here, you!" Slosson raised his voice. This call brought a half-grown black boy from about a corner of the tavern, to whom Murrell relinquished his horse.

"Let's liquor," said the captain over his shoulder, moving off in the direction of the bar.

"Come on, Nevvy!" said Yancy following, and they all entered the tavern.

"Well, here's to the best of good luck!" said Murrell, as he raised his glass to his lips.

"Same here," responded Yancy. Murrell pulled out a roll of bills, one of which he tossed on the bar. Then after a moment's hesitation he detached a second bill from the roll and turned to Hannibal.

"Here, youngster—a present for you," he said good-naturedly. Hannibal, embarrassed by the unexpected gift, edged to his Uncle Bob's side.

"Thank you, sir," said the boy.

"Let's have another drink," suggested Murrell.

Presently Hannibal stole out into the yard. He still held the bill in his hand, for he did not quite know how to dispose of his great wealth. After debating this matter for a moment he knotted it carefully in one corner of his handkerchief.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Let Them Go On Training.

The woman who thinks she has the best husband in the world probably doesn't know any better.

NEWS of MISSOURI

Van Waringa Back to Prison.

Kansas City.—Harry Van Waringa was sentenced by Judge Porterfield in the criminal court to serve eight years in hte penitentiary for forgery. Van Waringa, who has talent as a musician, while serving a term in the penitentiray two years ago, met Miss Ehel Farmins, stenographer for Cornelius Roach, secretary of state, at chapel exercises in the prison. They were married after his release.

Hygiene Society Organized.

Cape Girardeau.—Seventy-five doctors, health officers and registrars of the Fourth district of Missouri organized a hygienic society here, with the following officers: President, Dr. K. C. Boone, Charleston; first vice-president, Dr. E. E. Higdon, Allenville; second vice-president, Dr. T. W. Cotton, Van Buren; secretary, Dr. W. A. Kendall, Poplar Bluff.

New National Guard Post.

Mexico.—The Missouri Military academy, in this city, has been made a post of the national guard of Missouri. Brevet commissions were granted to the instructors in the academy, as follows: W. R. Kohr, colonel; W. E. Mould, lieutenant colonel; J. L. Brant and C. F. Block, captains; Blaine McKusick and G. F. Brooks, lieutenants.

Mother Afire Saves Baby.

Cape Girardeau.—Mrs. Emilie Dambach, a farmer's wife, was burned to death in her home near here. She had her baby on her arm and in attempting to light a lamp her dress caught on fire. She threw the baby to safety, but before her husband could come to her assistance she was so badly burned that she died.

Rev. Henry Sheldon Named.

Sedalia.—The Kansas City Association of Congregational Churches met here for its annual meeting. These officers were elected: Moderator, Rev. Harry Sheldon, Kansas City; scribe, Miss Elizabeth Schaffner, Kansas City; registrar, for one year, Rev. Harold Cooper of Sedalia.

Many to Take Rhodes Examination.

Columbia.—The number of students from Missouri universities and colleges who will try for the Rhodes scholarship this year is expected to be larger than ever before. The scholarship is valued at $1,500 a year and the winner must spend his time in study at Oxford, England.

Judge Dies on Street.

Tipton.—Judge T. G. Snorgrass, 70 years old, was found dead on the street. Snorgrass was a Confederate soldier, was mayor of Syracuse, Mo., and judge of the Morgan county court at the time of his death.

Governor Revokes Parole.

Jefferson City.—The parole granted to Albert Yarbrough of Washington county, who was serving five years for the felonious wounding of a man with whom he had trouble, was revoked by Gov. Hadley.

Murderer Sent to Asylum.

Jefferson City.—Gov. Hadley ordered Elemo Ramos, who came to the penitentiary to serve a life sentence for murder from Johnson county, transferred to the state hospital for the insane at Fulton.

Republicans Indorse Democrat.

Centralia.—The Republican and Bull Moose parties of Boone county have indorsed the Democratic nominee, E. C. Anderson, for prosecuting attorney. He will have no opposition.

Roads Improvement Carried.

Houston.—An estimate of the strength of the good roads movement was evidenced, when the special road district proposition was carried at Cabool by 5 to 1.

Worth Bank Is Robbed.

Worth.—Safe blowers here dynamited the safe of the Bank of Worth, obtained $1,700 in currency and escaped. Three explosions were heard by citizens, but no importance was attached to them.

Burned Using Oil to Start Fire.

Sedalia.—Mrs. Blaine Reynolds, 30 years old, was fatally burned here following her effort to start a fire with the aid of kerosene oil.

Phone-Rate Inquiry Demanded.

Columbia.—Because the rates for telephones in Columbia are higher than in any other town in Missouri of its size, an investigation has been demanded by Councilman W. W. Garth, Jr.

St. Louisan Thrown From Train.

Moberly.—John Cosgrove of St. Louis is at the Wabash hospital here seriously injured. He says he was thrown from a Wabash train at High Hill, Mo., by a brakeman.

Better Highways Demanded.

Hannibal.—Additional cross-state highways through northern Missouri and a road between Hannibal and Des Moines, Ia., are in demand, according to Sydney J. Roy, secretary of the Hannibal Commercial Club.

Mexico to Have Carnegie Library.

Mexico.—The passing of a resolution by the city council guaranteeing a maintenance tax of $1,250 for a Carnegie library building for Mexico practically insures a $12,500 structure for this city.

Dull.

"Was your aviation meet a success?"

"No, not much of a one. There were only three accidents and no fatalities."

The Only Way.

"No use to woo that girl. She has a heart of marble."

"Then leave it in statu quo."

Comparative Luxury.

"My father has a horse and buggy."

"Yes, but my brother was run over by an automobile."

Will Soon Wake Up.

Cincinnati woman declares she has discovered a man without a fault. Wait till they've been married ten years.—Milwaukee Sentinel.

At a Distance.

"She certainly tries to obey her mother's injunction not to let the young men get too near."

"Why, I saw a young man with his arm around her last night."

"I know, but she had a faraway look in her eyes."

Jackson's Relief.

Wilson (who has met his friend whom he hasn't seen for some time)—Let me see, you knew poor old Jackson, didn't you?

Johnson—Yes, I knew him well.

Wilson—Then you will be pleased to hear he is out of his misery at last.

Johnson—You don't say so. Poor old fellow; but I always thought he would pop off suddenly. When did he die?

Wilson—Oh, he's not dead; it's his wife.

Height of Assurance.

A man was charged with stealing a horse, and after a long trial the jury acquitted him. Later in the day the man came back and asked the judge for a warrant against the lawyer who had successfully defended him.

"What's the charge?" inquired the judge.

"Why, your honor," replied the man, "you see, I didn't have the money to pay him his fee, so he took the horse I stole."—Lippincott's Magazine.

Open Air Schools Grow in Favor.

With the opening of the fall school term, over 200 open air schools and fresh air classes for tuberculous and anaemic children, and also for all children in certain rooms and grades, will be in operation in various parts of the United States, according to the National Association for the Study and Prevention of Tuberculosis. All of these schools have been established since January, 1907, when the first institution of this character was opened in Providence, R. I. On January 1st, 1910, there were only 13 open air schools in this country and a year later the number had increased only to 29. Thus, the real growth in this movement has been within the last two years. Massachusetts now leads the states with 86 fresh air schools and classes for tuberculous, anaemic and other school children, Boston alone having over 50. New York comes next with 29, and Ohio is third with 21. Open air schools have now been established in nearly 50 cities in 19 different states.